

# Federal Computer Week

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## EVM at work

OPM demonstrates the difficulty –  
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Elizabeth Mautner  
spearheaded the use of  
earned value management  
to keep the Office of  
Personnel Management's  
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# Acquiring Foreign Language Skills via Rosetta Stone

**E**arlier this month President Bush announced plans to increase foreign language study in the United States by launching the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI).

The program aims to address the deficit of critical language capabilities in the U.S. through a comprehensive national initiative that involves the Departments of Defense, State, and Education and the National Intelligence Council.

Foreign language training is integral to enhancing U.S. efforts in national security, diplomacy, law enforcement and intelligence gathering. However, in addition to traditional classroom-based education, Web-based training resources are making an increasingly valuable contribution by delivering language training to a wider audience at dramatically reduced costs. The DoD Language Transformation Roadmap (Jan 2005) is the military's plan to implement foreign language training for the Force. The Army e-Learning component of the Army's Distributed Learning System (DLS) offers an example and template for how Web-based foreign language training can be offered across military services as well as in the private sector.

The Rosetta Stone foreign language training program is used successfully by U.S. Special Operations Forces, The U.S. Military Academy, NASA and the State Department, as well as by millions of people in 150 countries. The 29 languages offered by Rosetta Stone cover those spoken by 90 percent of the world's population, including critical languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Hindi, Farsi and Pashto. In addition, Rosetta Stone helps command language program managers meet the goals and requirements contained in the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap.

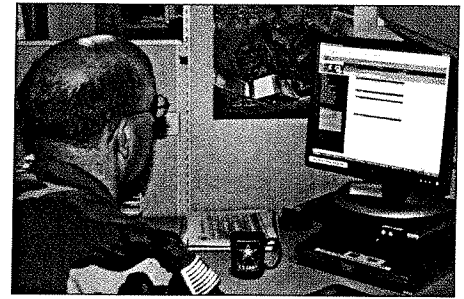
## Critical Foreign-Language Skills Are Increasingly Acquired Over the Web

Limited foreign language learning opportunities in military resident school systems, combined with time constraints, have created barriers that work against the goals of fielding Forces capable of engaging in basic communications with local populations in deployed areas. Faced with the question of how Army personnel can maximize their use of available time to develop critical language skills, the Army established a relationship with Fairfield Language Technologies, Inc., which offers Rosetta Stone. The partnership ensures that Army e-Learning delivers language training that matches requirements for mission success by providing available, on-demand commercial language training to Soldiers from novice to linguist.

Rosetta Stone provides the Army with an immediate, interactive foreign language learning tool that eliminates the travel costs and time constraints associated with classroom-based training. Individuals can complete foreign language training as their time allows. The program also improves morale by allowing Service members to obtain training without leaving their home station.

## Web-Based Foreign-Language Courses Are Addressing Important Needs

Increasing global deployments to support the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) is placing a demand for language training that can't be met through traditional methods. As a result, classroom-based training has not been able to keep up with the demand for critical foreign language instruction. The Army e-Learning program has exploited information technology resources to bring language education to active duty, Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) and the Army civilian workforce. By centralizing the costs and resources required to



deliver language training, Army e-Learning allows personnel to learn critical language skills at no cost and with minimal administrative effort.

Army e-Learning allows personnel to begin foreign language training on demand, eliminating the paperwork processes involved in applying for classroom-based training opportunities. Typical foreign language classroom based training focuses on developing expert linguists, which can take up to three years. Now, personnel easily access the training by logging on to Army Knowledge Online (AKO), the single point of entry for all of the Army's Web-based training. The streamlined process enables Army personnel to advance their careers by pursuing previously unavailable or difficult-to-initiate training, and strengthens the Army and the country's national security interests.

By completing foreign language training and other courses over the Web, Army personnel can earn Promotion Points or Continuous Learning Points. As individuals expand their knowledge and education, their progress is recorded in the Army Training Requirements and Resources System (ATRRS).

From an Army command perspective, it's neither fiscally responsible nor mission-compatible to deploy soldiers and civilians from their duty stations to complete required training when state-of-the-art Web-based resources are available. With its 274 Digital Training Facilities at 115 locations worldwide, DLS enables foreign language training globally in support of current and future operational requirements. And by centralizing resources and costs, DLS and Army e-Learning have established a model other government organizations can follow to increase cost-effective foreign language training. □